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Carlucci Wants to Revamp Management By U.S. of Covert Operations, Sources Say

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WASHINGTON — President Reagan's designated national security adviser, Frank Carlucci, is moving to tighten the administration's management of covert operations in the wake of the Iran-Contra affair.

Mr. Carlucci is proposing the creation of a new interagency mechanism to oversee covert operations carried out by U.S. intelligence agencies, according to administration sources. In addition, he is preparing a directive making it clear that the National Security Council henceforth will be an advisory and coordinating body, not an operational agency, according to officials who are helping Mr. Carlucci reshape the council's staff.

Mr. Carlucci, who will assume his new job Jan. 2, also has decided to hire a general counsel to help police the council staff and to monitor congressional restrictions on the president's foreign policy powers, the sources said.

In a meeting yesterday, Mr. Carlucci told newly hired council staff members that the National Security Council's small staff will no longer run secret operations and will concentrate on improving the quality of foreign policy advice to the president, according to officials who were there.

Administration officials have said the administration's secret arms sales to Iran and the effort to divert some profits from the sales to Nicaraguan rebels were deliberately kept hidden from two interagency committees that are supposed to manage covert operations.

The two committees are the cabinet-level National Security Planning Group and the so-called Policy Development Group, which is composed of senior officials from the State and Defense departments, the Central Intelligence Agency and other agencies.

Ensuring Reviews

Sources close to the new national security adviser say Mr. Carlucci, a former deputy director of the CIA and deputy defense secretary, has concluded that the absence of broad oversight allowed the administration's sensible idea of seeking improved relations with Iran to degenerate into a trade of arms for U.S. hostages—and perhaps into a questionable source of financing for the Nicaraguan rebels as well.

As a result, these sources said, Mr. Carlucci has suggested taking steps to ensure that high-ranking officials from the White House, the CIA, the Pentagon, the State Department and other agencies review proposals for covert operations and monitor them after they are launched.

Trimming Staff

Mr. Carlucci also intends to trim the size of the National Security Council staff and clarify the chain of command within it, administration officials said. He will have one deputy, Army Lt. Gen. Colin Powell, a former top aide to Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger. Lt. Gen. Powell returned to Washington yesterday from an assignment in West Germany.

The new general counsel, the executive secretary, a public affairs expert, a congressional relations officer and a newly created position of "counsellor" will report to Mr. Carlucci and Lt. Gen. Powell, officials said.

Mr. Carlucci has recruited Grant Green, a former aide from his Pentagon stint, as executive secretary. He will name Peter Rodman, a current council staff member and former aide to Henry Kissinger, to serve as counsellor, administration sources said. He hasn't hired a general counsel and is still searching for congressional and public relations experts, the sources said.

State of the World Message

Among other things, Mr. Rodman, the new "counsellor," will be responsible for preparing a "state of the world" message President Reagan is to deliver next April, and for bringing in outside experts and paid consultants to brief Mr. Carlucci, the president and other officials.

Under Mr. Carlucci, the council's controversial office of political-military affairs, where fired White House aide Oliver North worked, will be abolished and replaced by a catch-all office of multilateral affairs.

The new office will be responsible for counter-terrorist policy, United Nations affairs and other issues, sources said. No one has been hired to head the office or to manage the council's oversight of intelligence programs and international economic policies, the sources said.

Direct Line to Reagan

The staff assembled by Mr. Carlucci so far suggests the new national security adviser is emphasizing experience and professionalism over ideology or political credentials in his hiring decisions.

Some officials said they believe Mr. Carlucci's and Lt. Gen. Powell's ties to Mr. Weinberger may mean the council staff will align itself more closely to the Defense Department's hard-line positions on arms control and East-West relations. But officials close to Mr. Carlucci said the new national security adviser is determined to serve as an honest broker between the Pentagon, the State Department, the CIA and other agencies.

The officials said Mr. Carlucci also has been careful to secure a direct line to President Reagan, bypassing White House chief of staff Donald Regan.